SOIL CONSERVATION

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SOIL CONSERVATION

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SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

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CHIEF, SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

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WELLINGTON BRINK, EDITOR

CONTENTS

	Page
Farm Responds to PAUL WHITEMAN'S Baton By Constantine J. Conkes	123
WORLD DEMAND for WOOD.....An Editorial by John W. Keller	124
After 100 Years.....By William S. Otto and Donald A. Hannaman	125
A Dream Coming TRUE....Address by Dr. Hugh Hammond Bennett	126
GOVERNOR CHERRY.....Proclamation	127
Town of Wadesboro.....Resolution	128
County Bar Association.....Resolution	130
Hugh Hammond Bennett CONSERVATION DAY By Wellington Brink	132
"If YOU Fail, WE Slump".....By Sim Bennett	139
Hugh Hammond Bennett..By Brown Creek Soil Conservation District	140
Board of Commissioners.....Resolution	141
"THE HOPE OF THE GARDEN is not Gone"..By Jonathan Daniels	142

Front Cover: Skidding piling taken from woodlot on Clarence Strand farm, Houston, Minn. Photo by Gideon.

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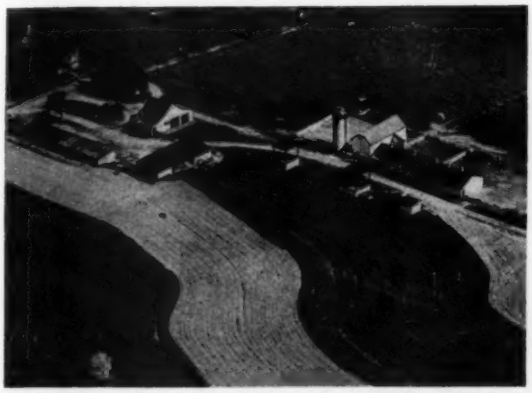
Farm responds to Paul Whiteman's baton

BY CONSTANTINE J. CONKES

Hat in hand, the bandleader discusses his farm plan with the author of this article.



Nature and homestead in harmony. Whiteman's farm was not always like this.

PAUL WHITEMAN, famous bandleader, wears a broad grin these days. Ask why, and he'll tell you it's because the 250-acre farm he bought in 1940 is finally buttoned down. But don't ask him anything more—not unless you have an afternoon free to listen to a conservation lecture.

Whiteman, who quit touring the big time dance-hall circuits several years ago, now spends half of each week at his Rosemont, N. J., farm, where he raises Aberdeen Angus breeding stock. Like all cattlemen, his goal was always to raise at least a substantial part of his feed needs right at home. That he didn't do until last year when he decided he had let enough of his rolling acres scoot out to the Delaware River where he figured they weren't doing anyone any good. His first step was to call in Howard Mason, district conservationist for the Morris-Warren Soil Conservation District, and ask him to do something about his jitterbugging fields. Mason advised a complete conservation farm plan. And there's never been a more conscientious follower of the soil conservation plan than the hefty Whiteman.

He buckled right down and got 30 acres strip cropped. Then he constructed, a 1,600-foot diversion terrace, the first of 8 to be built on the farm. That doesn't mean that Whiteman sat back on the cool white porch of his farm home and gave orders. He hoisted on his size 46 dungarees, pulled down the brim of his fawn-colored 10-gallon hat, rolled up his ample sleeves, and pitched in. Labor was scarce during 1945 and many an hour the big fellow, who spent so many years wielding a baton before admiring throngs, sweat off pound after plentiful pound driving a 3-bot-

Paul Whiteman likes Aberdeen Black Angus cattle. His herd numbers 85.

(*Continued on page 124*)

NOTE.—The author is work unit conservationist, Soil Conservation Service, Flemington, N. J.

WORLD DEMAND FOR WOOD

AN EDITORIAL BY JOHN W. KELLER

THE demand for wood of all kinds greatly exceeds the quantity currently being cut in the United States. In 1945 the goal set by Government experts for our national lumber production was 32 billion board feet. The quantity actually produced was only 27½ billion feet. In 1946 again, we need at least 32 billion board feet, but production is expected to fall below this figure. This situation is likely to continue for a number of years. The potential lumber demand of the United States for the next 10 years, according to the Department of Commerce, is 39 billion board feet annually. We shall need 18 million cords of pulpwood within that period, but production is expected to fall short by 2 million cords. Utility companies will need millions of poles and ties, construction companies will need vast quantities of building materials, and farmers will need 70 million cords of fuel wood and 350 million fence posts in addition to repair and building lumber. No one can predict the wood products that will be required for new uses of wood such as impreg, compreg, staypak, papreg, and for laminated and molded wood products. Production is not expected to meet the demand. In fact, postwar reconstruction in the United States is endangered because of lack of wood.

The war-torn countries across the oceans also are desperately in need of wood. They have called upon the United States, and millions of board feet have been exported to them. Russia has the world's largest supply of wood, but she will need all she can manufacture and transport for a number of years to rebuild her own country. The Czechs and Rumanians have small quantities of wood for export, but the transportation lines are out and their supplies cannot be gotten to market. Norway, Sweden, France, Germany, and Finland have small supplies for their own use. Sweden and Finland may have a little to spare for export. England, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Greece, and many of the other small countries must import wood to meet their needs. With their buildings and bridges destroyed, their furniture and the interiors of their houses pillaged for fuel for cooking purposes, and transportation crippled, it will be a long time before their available wood supplies will meet the current needs.

These facts mean that the 137 million acres of farm woodlands on the farms in the United States are indispensable not only to the farm prosperity, but to the prosperity of the country as a whole. Farm woodlands are now furnishing more than one-third of all the wood products produced in the United States. This is more than their share, but they must furnish more. We know that with careful cutting and protection, farm woodlands are capable of producing eventually from 2 to 3 times as much wood as now, and the country needs it to meet the timber demand. The Nation needs well-managed woodlands also for conservation of soil and water.

Many chemical products made from wood can be made also from fodder, straw, and grains of cultivated crops. If the supply of wood products is not sufficient, more cultivated crops will be grown. This may bring such pressure on the land that land of capability classes IV to VII will be cultivated, with the result that soil erosion problems will be intensified. This need not happen if we apply the woodland conservation practices of protection, planting, and careful cutting on our present farm woodlands.

WHITEMAN FARM

(*Continued from page 123*)

tom plow over the lonesome contoured route planned by soil conservation technicians, until he finally etched out the long diversion terrace which he'd set his heart on finishing before seeding time.

He buttoned down the soil all right! So much so that he reached the goal he'd set for himself—plenty of food for his stock—from his own fields. He filled his two silos with the yield from 10 strip-cropped acres last year. The year before that, it required 30 acres to grow that quantity of corn. To take care of his year-around needs, he had corn from another 25 acres, 1,000 bushels of barley from 17 acres, 400 bushels of wheat from 10 acres, and the yield from 40 acres of timothy, clover, and alfalfa.

Whiteman doesn't claim that strip cropping and terracing alone are responsible for his handsome gains. He believes that putting each acre to its

(*Continued on page 141*)

After 100 years . . .

Giant machine strikes climax to a century of activity by Maryland farm leaders. Dr. Bennett is at left of cab. At left, on cab itself, is Maryland's Governor Herbert W. O'Conor. Below him is Senator James M. Tunnell, Sr., of Delaware.

By William S. Otto and Donald A. Hannaman

ON THE EASTERN shore of Chesapeake Bay, where Delaware meets Maryland, 650 persons gathered last September 25, beside the banks of the Pocomoke River. They were there to watch Delaware accept responsibility from Maryland for the completion of the 20-mile channel which will drain approximately 100,000 acres in the two States. Promptly at noon, a giant drag-line scooped through the last few feet of Maryland soil remaining on the project.

Present for the historic event were Maryland's Governor Herbert W. O'Conor, Delaware's Senator James M. Tunnell, Sr. On hand, too, were Dr. Hugh H. Bennett, Chief of the Soil Conservation Service; Dr. H. C. Byrd, president of the University of Maryland; Dr. Austin L. Patrick, Regional Conservator for the Soil Conservation Service in the Northeastern States; and Dr. T. B. Symons, director of extension in Maryland and chairman of the State soil conservation committee.

The Pocomoke project was first planned over a hundred years ago when farm leaders in the vicinity staged a lottery to raise funds to dredge the sluggish stream. Dr. Bennett, in the principal address of the day, declared that wetlands such as those of the Pocomoke are the last frontier remaining in America. He extolled, as an outstanding example of interstate cooperation, the joint efforts of Delaware and Maryland in building this largest drainage ditch east of the Mississippi.

The final phases of the Pocomoke project commenced in 1939 with CCC boys doing the initial surveying and clearing. Later work was done by conscientious objectors of the CPS. Technical assistance was first given by the Bureau of Agricultural Engineers whose operations subsequently were assigned to the Soil Conservation Service.

Note.—The authors are, respectively, District Conservationis' and Engineering Specialist, Soil Conservation Service, Salisbury Md.

A Dream Coming True

Address prepared by Dr. Hugh Hammond Bennett for delivery on Hugh Bennett Conservation Day, Wadesboro, N. C.

IT IS NOT EASY for me to tell you in any adequate way how honored I am on this day, which has been named for myself, and how very much I appreciate this expression of your kindly feelings.

You have asked me to come back home to my people today so that you might extend some tangible expression of your appreciation and good will concerning my work in soil conservation. I am accepting in the fullest personal sense this interest of yours and your kindness and hospitality, even though actually—and properly—you are paying tribute to a movement: Conservation of soil and water, a movement the objective of which is the welfare of the community and each individual in the community.

I don't know anything about how people who are honored as you have honored me today are normally affected by this sort of thing; but, as for me, this kind of expression by one's life-long friends is deeply touching. I hope I can go ahead with my part of the affairs of the day. Perhaps, the best way is to change the subject.

With your permission, I am going to discuss the national program of soil conservation—what it is, how it came about, and the progress that's being made. I may take advantage of the occasion to present some of my own experiences in relation to the development of the program. It would be difficult not to do so under present circumstances.

Let me say first that only a few years ago there was so little interest in this subject over most of the country that I never dreamed I would live to see the progress that's been made today. We have moved ahead in the United States from the unenviable position of wasting our basic resource of productive land at a faster pace than any nation or race that we know about, civilized or barbaric, up to the position of world leadership in the field of soil and water conservation. Specialists are now coming from the ends of the world as representatives of governments desirous of learning how we go about this task of taking good care of our agricultural lands. At least 30 countries are taking up our national pattern of soil conservation. Don't misunderstand me: We are not at all satisfied with present progress; we are still losing every year something like 500,000 acres of cropland by unnecessary soil erosion. But—and this is important—we do have a going program and we have learned a great deal about how to get the job done. The trail has been blazed; we are on the way. Last year, for example, we did more conservation work than in any previous year, even with shortages of technicians, machinery, and so on. We planned, in soil conservation districts, 20½ million acres and finished the job of putting conservation practices onto 13½ million acres of land in 1945. This year our goal is to double last year's output; the prospect for that looks good. And then, next year, we are going to do our best to double that accomplishment again. If we can do that—and I think we can—we really will be getting along with the prodigious job of safeguarding more than 700 million acres of crop, grazing, and other kinds of land needing protection.

Looking back—a very long way back, it seems to me—I remember an occasion when my father was laying off terrace lines over on the Peter Place with an old-fashioned wooden "horse." A level attached to a cross-bar on this home-made contraption made it possible to survey out quite satisfactory terrace-grade lines. This was about 55 years ago. I recall this incident, because I had been assigned the task of making marker holes with a hoe at one end of the widely-straddling legs of the leveling outfit, so that the plowmen could follow the lines in constructing the terrace embankment.

I remember asking why we were doing this. My father's laconic reply was: "To keep the soil from washing away."

That incident, however, had very little to do with the development of any particular interest on my part in the national erosion problem, insofar as I can recall. But the concern of my father about holding onto his soil—his capital asset—

Proclamation

WHEREAS, Hugh Hammond Bennett, an Anson County farm boy, has through his deep love for the soil become an outstanding figure in soil conservation in this and many lands, and

WHEREAS, he has tirelessly dedicated some 43 years to study and instruction in land preservation, first in his own State, then in the Nation, and finally in the nations of the world, and

WHEREAS, he has waged an unremitting fight for wise land use in the past which led to his eventual appointment as chief of the soil conservation service, and is at present still conducting a vigorous fight for the Nation-wide adoption of soil conservation measures to protect the Nation's resources for this and future generations.

THEREFORE, I, R. Gregg Cherry, as Governor, hereby designate and proclaim—in connection with a home-coming celebration in Mr. Bennett's home county of Anson—that the day of September 9, 1946, be Hugh Bennett Conservation Day in North Carolina.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina to be duly affixed.

[SEAL] (Signed) R. GREGG CHERRY,
Governor.

By the Governor:
(Signed) JOHN HARDEN,
Private Secretary.

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came back to memory vividly later on when I began to see what serious damage uncontrolled water was doing to the United States.

Terracing was about the only thing that farmers did in those days for the specific purpose of controlling erosion. In most parts of the country, we were not even using terraces—farmers were doing just about nothing, generally, beyond throwing a few cornstalks into a gully occasionally.

I think my first real interest in the subject was when, 41 years ago, W. E. McLendon, of Bishopville, S. C., and I were making a soil survey of Louisa County, Va. (1905).

Our chief, the head of the old Bureau of Soils, instructed us to look carefully into the reason behind the reputation of the locality for its poor land. This was stimulating, something outside daily routine. We found a good deal of naturally poor land which consisted principally of decomposed talcose rock, but we found also much sloping land which had been made poor by erosion. In wooded areas that never had been plowed, we found, without exception, deep loam soil which was so soft and mellow at all times you could dig into it with the bare hands. In many adjacent fields, however, we found hard clay subsoil at the surface. This clay dried out almost to the condition of rock with every drought. Originally, the soil in such places was like that in the woods; but with cultivation a profound change had come about: The mellow topsoil had been stripped off by rainfall, a thin layer at a time, as muddy water flowed off the fields into the streams with every rain. Then it was that we learned the real meaning of sheet erosion: The removal of a thin layer, or sheet, from the surface of entire sloping fields as suspended material—mud—in the runoff of rainfall.

Following that basic discovery, my next revealing awakening was in Fairfield County, S. C., where we made a soil survey in 1910–11. This survey revealed that of the 483,000 acres in the county, 137,000 acres, 28 percent, had been so damaged by erosion that it had no further practical value for any immediate cultivation. In addition, the topsoil had been largely stripped from 79,000 acres, or 16 percent of the area. Thus, in this relatively small county, 216,000 acres, 45 percent of the total area, had been ruined or severely damaged by erosion.

Since that time, the damaged area has extended further. Some of the roads we drove over in 1911, with horse and buggy, have been completely

Contouring comes to a farm near Ellerbe, N. C.

Resolution

Town of Wadesboro

WHEREAS, the soil is our most priceless natural resource, giving us food, clothing, and shelter; and

WHEREAS, the town of Wadesboro, all its businesses and industries, and all its citizens depend for their prosperity and well-being upon the preservation and wise use of our soil resources; and

WHEREAS, Hugh Hammond Bennett, who was born on a plantation near Wadesboro, has for 43 years devoted great energy and magnificent leadership to the conservation, improvement, and wise use of our land resources; and

WHEREAS, Hugh Hammond Bennett as chief of the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, has directed a Nation-wide program of soil erosion prevention and control, and proper land use, of such soundness that many other countries are following this example; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of the Brown Creek Soil Conservation District, including the farm lands on which Dr. Bennett was reared, is the oldest such district in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the board of supervisors of the said Brown Creek District are sponsoring in Wadesboro, September 9, 1946, the Hugh Bennett Soil Conservation Day celebration in honor of this our native son;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the board of commissioners of Wadesboro, N. C., in regular session, desire to commend the supervisors of the Brown Creek District for their recognition of Dr. Bennett:

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Board joins in expressing its appreciation of the life and accomplishments of the said Dr. Bennett and extends to him the freedom of the town;

AND BE IT FUETHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be spread upon the minutes of the board of commissioners of the town of Wadesboro, and that a copy of the same be presented to Dr. Bennett.

I, W. L. Ashcraft, clerk to the board of commissioners of the town of Wadesboro, Anson County, N. C., do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the commissioners of said town, and in testimony thereof I do hereunto set my hand and the official seal of the town of Wadesboro.

[SEAL] (Signed) W. L. Ashcraft,
Clerk to the board of commissioners of the town of Wadesboro, N. C.

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abandoned. On at least one road we recently found it best to go all the way through to the other end once we had started, so difficult it would have been to turn around, because of encroaching gullies.

The rural population when we were there was 29,442 (census 1910); the corresponding population in 1940 was 13,462 (census 1940). That is one of the things uncontrolled soil erosion does.

I thought, way back there, that when the Fairfield survey report was published it would arouse considerable interest; but, after being distributed by Congressman and agricultural authorities of South Carolina and the United States Department of Agriculture, it didn't even ripple the placid surface of national complacency with respect to the welfare of the land. And this was one of the first quantitative measurements of the effects of soil erosion ever made. Obviously people were not interested.

Not much could be done in those days toward creating national interest in the subject. Findings more or less like those in Fairfield County were reported from other parts of the country, such as Stewart County, Ga.; Lauderdale County, Miss.; and Caswell County, N. C. But nothing was done; no interest, no comments, just pure indifference—the inheritance of those halcyon days when our forefathers unfortunately felt we could never use up our supposedly limitless supply of "indestructible" land. Some well meaning students of soils got so sidetracked onto complex fertility studies, in those days, they forgot about, or didn't understand, the terrific rate at which good farm land was being unnecessarily gutted by erosion. Yet, from about 1890 to 1935, according to my estimate, we were losing in this country, as the result of erosion, approximately a million acres of crop and pasture land every year, the areal equivalent of 10 thousand 100-acre farms.

(TELEGRAM)

JOE M. LILES, *Chairman, Board of Supervisors, Brown Creek Soil Conservation District, Wadesboro, N. C.*

YOUR HUGH BENNETT DAY CELEBRATION IS GRATIFYING TO US WHO WORK WITH HIM. NO CONSERVATIONIST BETTER DESERVES THIS RECOGNITION. YOU OF THE BROWN CREEK DISTRICT AND ANSON COUNTY MAY WELL BE PROUD OF HIM AND HIS SOIL CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS. THE FACT YOU VOTED THE NATION'S FIRST SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT DOUBTLESS HAS BEEN SPECIAL INSPIRATION TO DR. BENNETT. DEPARTMENT POLICY LONG HAS SUPPORTED THIS KIND OF WORK AND I HOPE DR. BENNETT MAY LIVE TO SEE HIS DREAM OF UNIVERSAL SOIL CONSERVATION FULFILLED.

(Signed) CLINTON P. ANDERSON,
Secretary.

SEPTEMBER 4, 1946.

It was even worse than that. Some folks got their feet so far off the ground as to say: "The soil is the one indestructible, immutable asset that the Nation possesses. It is the one resource that cannot be exhausted; that cannot be used up."

When I read this, I learned that it was possible to pack a lot of misinformation in two short sentences, even when the statements carry the full resounding ring of what is sometimes referred to as eloquence. The truth is, we can get along with what is left of our productive land only if we take scrupulous care of every remaining acre. Too many farms, too many localities, have already come to ruin for any further theorizing, philosophizing, listening to "rugged individualism," high-sounding panaceas, and so on.

In the meantime, still looking at the historical side of soil conservation, a few people were writing a little and talking a good deal about the subject of soil erosion. Finally, after a long time, there was begun in the United States Department of Agriculture an educational campaign on the subject. Among other things, we published a bulletin called "Soil Erosion A National Menace." Some of the newspapers and an occasional agricultural journal printed extracts from our educational material. Later, some of the magazines began asking for articles on the erosion problem and what to do about it.

Then, in 1928, I was asked to present to a congressional committee handling appropriations for the Department of Agriculture the whole national problem of land damage by erosion and what needed to be done as a first step toward getting under way a Nation-wide program of conservation (Hearings on the Agricultural Appropriation Bill for 1930, 70th Cong., 2d sess., pp. 310–330, Nov. 21, 1928). As a result, an appropriation was made through the Buchanan amendment providing Federal funds to set up regional erosion stations for measuring the rates of soil and water losses, for making surveys to determine the extent of damage by erosion and location of the principal areas affected, and for working out methods of control.

It was not long before overwhelmingly convincing information was acquired in quantity at these stations. For example, at the 10 stations established on 10 very important types of farm land scattered throughout the country more than 200,000 quantitative measurements were quickly made of soil and water losses under different conditions of land use. In rapid order, estimates were thus replaced with measured facts.

West Rocky Ford Church, west of Bennett's old home. It was formerly one of the Bennett plantation schools.

It is interesting to note in this connection that some of the estimates relating to the vast extent of land damage which I had previously turned loose on an unprepared public—of which there was some criticism in a few papers here and there—proved to be underestimates. With the new information, it was possible to say at this later stage, for example, that every year enough soil was being washed out of our fields and pastures to load a train of freight cars that would encircle the earth 18 times at the equator. Nobody challenged that statement, even though it was much larger than any preceding estimates.

So much for history and the problem. Let's look now into the matter of what's being done about it.

First of all, a national consciousness as to the extent and seriousness of erosion has been developed. That alone is worth a great deal, because when Americans get an idea thoroughly implanted in their heads they are about as determined as any people on earth in doing something about it. I don't mean that all the facts have been absorbed into public understanding yet. They haven't been, of course, but there has been enough advanced thinking to give those of us who are engaged in the conservation job a great deal of encouragement. For example, banks, railroads, newspapers, civic organizations, soil conservation districts, manufacturing establishments, and individuals are providing for conservation prizes of various kinds and are putting out an enormous amount of effective educational information.

There is another thing—and it's very important. Too many people still seem to think that the food they buy in cans and sacks down at the corner grocery store somehow grows right there in the store.

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They still fail to understand that food comes from productive land and from nowhere else. They don't think about it, really.

Why, it has taken more than 19 centuries—since the beginning of Christian civilization—for this fundamental fact regarding the source of food to find its way into common understanding, if it really has advanced that far, is most difficult to understand. There is plenty of evidence in the Bible, by inference at any rate, that when productive land is damaged by erosion, the fruitfulness of our fields is undermined. The poorer yields from sowings on stony ground (Matthew 13: 3–8) may have reference to land reduced to stoniness by continuing erosion. Listen to what the Apostle, St. Matthew, said:

"Some [seeds] fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth;

"And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

"* * * But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold."

Anyway, we remained blissfully ignorant of the full meaning of productive land down across the centuries until some 15 years ago. Until then, you seldom heard the word "topsoil" used. No one but a few soil specialists and excavators of earth ever made any very meaningful use of the word "subsoil."

Those who talk about the effects of diet on health and those who broadcast the beneficence of vitamins seldom recognize the important part the soil plays in providing a healthful diet. Many of us probably need to stop every now and then for more thoughtful consideration of the fact that when topsoil is permitted to wash off the land, the process takes the whole soil and all it contains, including elements of nutrition—minor elements as well as major elements—along with the microscopic organisms that help make land productive. We need also to realize that what is so often left behind for the farmer to till is unprocessed raw subsoil which is far less absorbent of rainfall than was the topsoil, is more difficult to plow, is deficient in all available nutrients, and is much less productive. Subsoil can be improved, of course, but lost topsoil cannot be restored in measurable time.

A good many parts of the world have been so damaged by erosion that the people are gone and all the works of mankind have fallen into decay and ruin. The city of Antioch in Syria, for example—where the Apostle Paul had such a struggle in getting the Christian religion established—was so deeply covered in one section by erosion debris washed down from the adjacent mountains that archaeologists had to dig 18 feet in places to reach the tops of the magnificent structures that graced this once great city.

Some years ago, I visited Dr. T. L. Shear at Princeton University, on his return from the excavation of the theater at ancient Corinth, to whose inhabitants St. Paul directed some of the most famous letters ever penned on earth. I asked the famous archaeologist how deep he had to dig to reach the theater. "Forty feet," he said. Then I asked where the covering material came

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Resolution

County Bar Association

WHEREAS, Hugh Hammond Bennett, a native of Anson County, and Chief of the Soil Conservation Service, has won national and internationl recognition for his leadership in soil conservation and good land use; and

WHEREAS, today, September 9, 1946, is by proclamation of the Honnorable R. Gregg Cherry, Governor of North Carolina, designated as Hugh Hammond Bennett Soil Conservation Day in North Carolina, and

WHEREAS, today, September 9, 1946, the supervisors of the Brown Creek Soil Conservation District, the first of more than 1,650 farmer-organized and farmer-controlled districts in the Nation, are sponsoring a special celebration in honor of Dr. Bennett;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that at the conclusion of its work and when adjournment is taken on this day of special significance, this Court do adjourn in honor of and respect to the life and accomplishments of the said Hugh Hammond Bennett; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution be spread on the minutes of this term of the Superior Court of Anson County, and that a copy be presented to Hugh Hammond Bennett.

I, Barrington T. Hill, clerk of the superior court of Anson County, N. C., do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the Resolution adopted by the Anson County Bar Association at a regular term of the superior court at Anson County while in session on this, Monday, September 9, 1946.

[SEAL] (Signed) BARRINGTON T. HILL,
Clerk of the Superior Court of Anson County, North Carolina.

from. "Washed down from the adjacent hillsides where most of the vegetation had been removed by goats," he replied.

Is there any wonder we are hearing from Greece that there probably is more erosion there than in any other European country? (Several of our employees are now working on the erosion problem of Greece.) There is plenty of erosion in Italy, too, but it appears not to be so bad as that in Greece. Perhaps some of the Italian people took counsel from Pliny (23 to 79 A. D.) who advised farmers tending hillside fields to run their furrows across the slopes and to provide channels to "draw off the water into drains." This may have been the beginning of the modern field terrace.

We have learned, also, that various older parts of the world, as in Asia Minor, have lost so much soil that nations and even civilizations have expired as a result.

The best farmer device yet invented for dealing firsthand, effectively, and democratically with the matter of taking care of our agricultural land is the soil conservation district. These districts are subdivisions of State government for soil conservation and good land use. They are brought into existence through the vote of the farmers themselves and are operated within their locally established boundaries by the farmers through their elected officers.

The growth of soil conservation districts is truly an American phenomenon and serves as the clearest, most significant kind of evidence to show how deeply the soil conservation movement has taken root in the agricultural life of the United States during the past several years.

Since 1937, soil conservation district laws, or laws that permit similar working arrangements, have been enacted by all 48 States and Puerto Rico. In the beginning, I had the feeling that if so many as 10 States passed such laws in 10 years that would be good progress. However, since the establishment of the first district in the United States—the Brown Creek Soil Conservation District here in Anson County, on August 4, 1937—nearly 1,650 districts have been formed throughout the country. These embrace about 900 million acres and 4 million farms—two-thirds of all the farms in the country.

In these districts, we have for the first time, I am convinced, really local farmer control of agricultural matters pertaining to the welfare of the land. Their formation, control, and operation are thoroughly democratic, from the first step of circulating a petition for a referendum, through voting in the referendum, to the election of district supervisors after a majority of the farmers have favored the establishment of a district. In these soil conservation districts, farmers are working together, especially in locality groups more or less bound together by community ties and land problems.

Proof of the popularity of soil conservation districts, it seems to me, is that now, 9 years after the establishment of your Brown Creek District, not a single district in the United States has revoked its charter, except for the one in Washington State where the farmers yielded to the request of the Government for war control of their lands for materials having to do with the development of atomic energy. Further evidence of how farmers feel toward districts is shown by the enlargement of 373 districts (July 1, 1946) through 551 separate petitions by surrounding farmers (adding a total of about 118,276,764 acres), and by the fact that they are still being formed at the rate of about 25 a month. Your own district has been enlarged to include Montgomery, Richmond, Union, and Stanley Counties. A number of States have been completely covered by districts; 87 percent of North Carolina is now covered, with petitions in from the western part of the State for the establishment of additional districts.

Back during the demonstrational period of the Service, some of us came to feel that soil conservation work could be speeded up by giving greater responsibility to farmers. It was further felt that inasmuch as farmers own and control the land needing conservation and must therefore have the final decision as to any work carried out on their own lands, they should direct the program. That is why—some of the reasons—the soil conservation district plan was conceived and developed. The soil conservation district is the most democratic organization of its kind ever devised.

But any organization must have understanding leadership and direction. To be effective—to be successful—that leadership must be from within. Soil conservation districts have that kind of leadership through their supervisors or directors, appointed or elected from among farmers themselves. Thus, the soil conservation districts owe allegiance to no power, Federal or other; their supervisors are answerable only to the farmers of their own districts. They are on nobody's payroll. They receive no favors or special privileges. Their work in managing district affairs is entirely voluntary, and they spend much time at considerable personal sacrifice purely in the interest of the district program. I know, for example, of supervisors who during the war saved almost all their rationed passenger car gasoline and the thinning rubber on their tires to attend district board meetings and do other district work—for which they weren't reimbursed 1 penny.

(*Continued on page 136*)

Hugh Hammond Bennett Conservation Day

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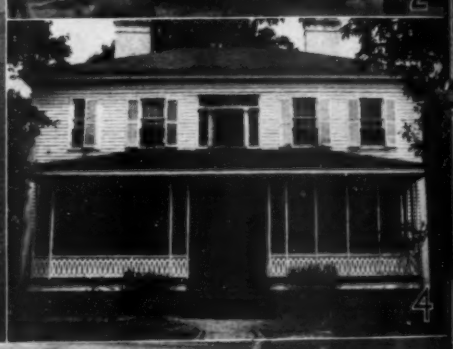

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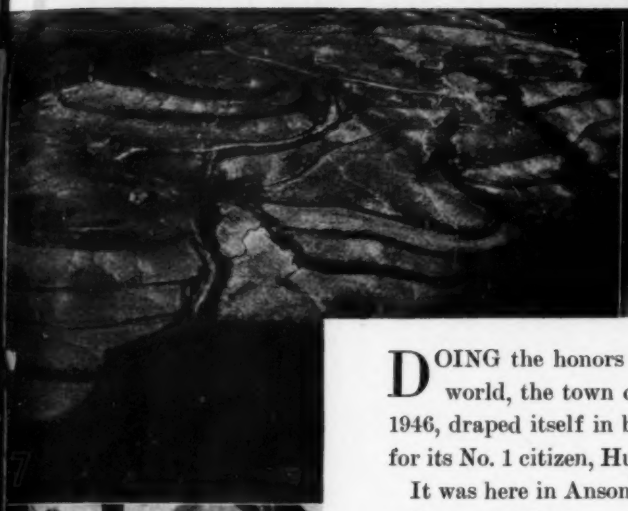
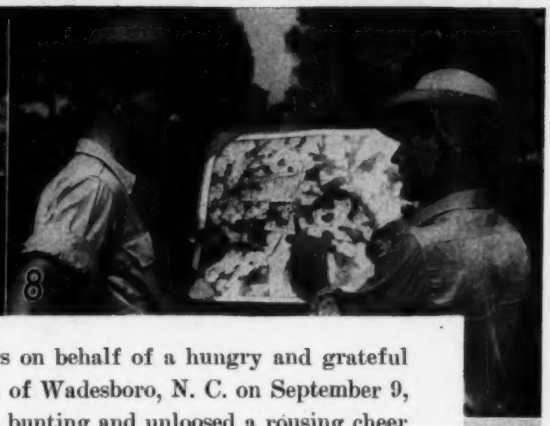
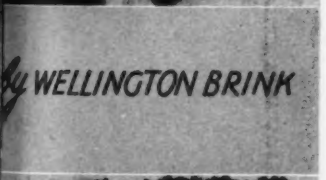




DOING the honors on behalf of a hungry and grateful world, the town of Wadesboro, N. C. on September 9, 1946, draped itself in bunting and unloosed a rousing cheer for its No. 1 citizen, Hugh Hammond Bennett.

It was here in Anson County that the modern program of soil conservation, now on a steady march around the globe, had its inception in the heart and mind of a farm lad of grit, gumption and imagination. Hugh Bennett, even as a barefoot youngster, was a determined rebel against soil ignorance and soil waste. He grew up to be the scientist, author, traveler, farmer, teacher, pamphleteer, strategist and leader around whom finally rallied the great American land army.

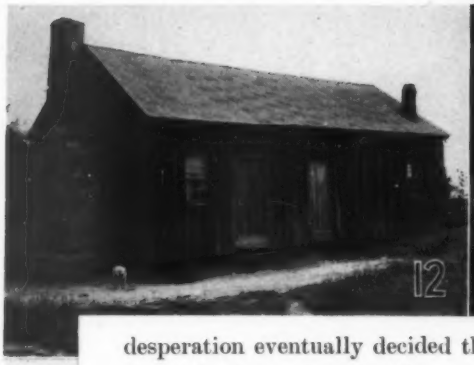
It was a long fight, a hard fight, and for many years virtually a single-handed fight. Depression, dust storms and

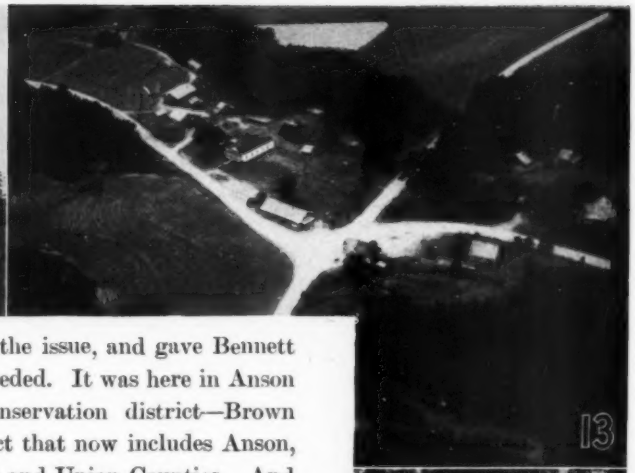


Hugh Bennett Day Pictures.—1. Boy Scouts sell tickets for barbecue. 2. "Welcome" and "Hail to the Chief"—and a key to the city to top it off! 3. They laugh, from the west: Mayor G. E. Andes, the honor guest, J. F. Allen, chairman of the County Board of Commissioners; H. P. Taylor, master of ceremonies. 4. Old Bennett home, where young Hugh lived.

5. At the barbecue the connoisseur enjoys gen-u-wine Brown Creek snappin' turtle soup and hush-puppies. 6. Gentlemen of the press—Harvey Dinkins, farm editor *Winston-Salem Journal*; Francis Boleyn, *Wadesboro Messenger and Intelligencer*; Dr. Bennett, Channing Cope, columnist *Atlanta Constitution*; Jonathan Daniels, author, luncheon speaker, *Raleigh News and Observer*; Granbery Dickson, representing *Charlotte Observer*, and E. H. Taylor, associate editor *Country Gentleman*. Not shown is Burke Davis, *Charlotte News* feature writer.

7. Farmsteads near Wadesboro which show how terrible is erosion and how necessary that every acre be treated according to its needs. 8. Anson County GI gets farm planning assistance from SCS work group leader. 9. Joe Lyle, Anson County district supervisor, grows good corn on his contoured fields. 10. Kudzu pasture works wonders on farm of F. P. Tedder, Mount Gilead. 11. They held a race in this new swimming hole which conservation brought to an old pasture.





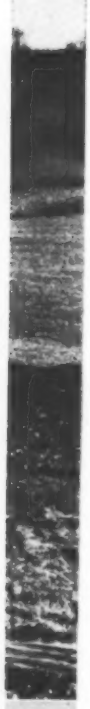
desperation eventually decided the issue, and gave Bennett the authority and support he needed. It was here in Anson County that the first soil conservation district—Brown Creek—got under way, a district that now includes Anson, Montgomery, Richmond, Stanly and Union Counties. And it was to Wadesboro that Hugh Bennett—the Man and his Ideas—returned to receive the acclaim of lifelong friends and neighbors.

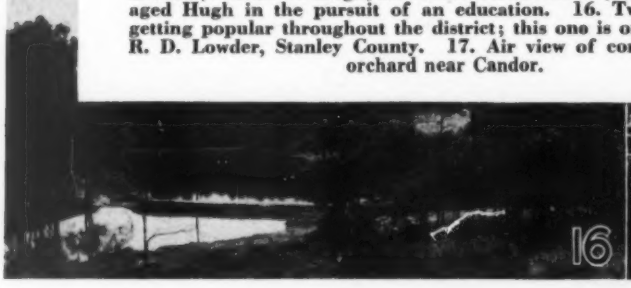
The Governor of the State, the Hon. R. Gregg Cherry, by special proclamation, designated September 9 as Hugh Hammond Bennett Conservation Day in North Carolina.

A 24-page lavishly illustrated booklet, dedicated to Bennett, was issued by the Brown Creek district in deference to the occasion. It was paid for by bankers of 13 different communities. It told the story of Hugh Bennett, and followed with the story of farming progress in the district under the Bennett methods of soil conservation.

The Hon. Clinton P. Anderson, Secretary of Agriculture, wired greetings from "us who work with him."

Wadesboro's board of commissioners joined in officialdom's flood of resolutions commending Bennett for his direction of the "Nation-wide program of soil erosion prevention and





More Bennett Day Pictures. 12. What's left of Gould's Fork Academy, where Hugh Bennett and other notables learned to study. 13. Air view of White Store Crossroads, once an important trading point. 14. Smokehouse on old Bennett plantation. 15. "Dr. Joe" Bennett, brother of Hugh, beloved of all the countryside; he encouraged Hugh in the pursuit of an education. 16. Twin ponds are getting popular throughout the district; this one is on the farm of R. D. Lowder, Stanley County. 17. Air view of contoured peach orchard near Candor.

control, and proper land use of such soundness that many other countries are following this example."

Anson County's board of commissioners sent its "cordial greeting and best wishes" to "the foremost authority on erosion and its prevention."

The superior court of Anson County adjourned "in honor and respect to the life and accomplishments of said Hugh Hammond Bennett."

From admirers in many parts of the country and from representatives of foreign countries, came messages of felicitation.

The celebration opened shortly before noon at the impressive pillared front of the courthouse, under a huge banner "Welcome Hugh," to the music of the high school band and the cheers of a large throng of townspeople and farmers from the surrounding countryside. Mayor G. E. Andes presented a 2-foot "key to the city" to the honored guest.

Principal speaker at an overflow luncheon meeting at a local hotel was Jonathan Daniels, famed author, journalist and former presidential secretary, who coupled Hugh Bennett with Thomas Wolfe as the two North Carolinians "who in our times have made the greatest impress on the mind of the world." The luncheon had as joint hosts the Civitan and Rotary clubs, with former State Senator H. P. Taylor as toastmaster. To Mrs. Bennett, "who has been at his side all these years as faithful counselor and partner," was presented an orchid. She was the only woman at the head table.

In the afternoon a 2-hour conducted tour was made of the Gould's Fork area so dear to the heart of Hugh as a youth. The purpose was dual—to savor old memories and to demonstrate the changes for the better that have been achieved through soil conservation. There were 18 stops along the way, with brief explanations of what has happened being made via the loud-speaker at the head of the motor cavalcade. The route included the birthplace of Hugh Bennett, the family school house, and Gould's Fork Academy. The aged Sim Bennett, son of a former slave and a

Old family school known as "Polly House"; it stands back of plantation house on Bennett place.

minister among his people, eloquently recalled his family's long and happy association with Hugh Bennett and his "folks." On the agenda, too, were swimmin' hole and fish ponds—new and old, green swards where once stretched worn and weary cotton fields, new woods on what once were cultivated fields, and a mule race reminiscent of the days of yore.

Bennett's own address followed a barbecue in the evening at the country club—a festive occasion featuring old-time Brown Creek snapping-turtle soup. An over-capacity crowd attended and the meeting which followed the meal was necessarily held in the open air from the front steps.

Hugh Bennett was deeply touched by "this kind of expression by one's lifelong friends"—and he proceeded, as is his wont, to tell what's happening to the land not only in Anson County but all over the world! "At least 30 countries," said he, "are taking up our national pattern of soil conservation." But—and this too was in character—"We are not at all satisfied with present progress."

So, at long last, the prophet found honor in his own country. Hugh Hammond Bennett Conservation Day in North Carolina—now linked in local annals with the 1900 total eclipse of the sun as one of the two biggest days in Wadesboro history—brought the chief back to the old camping grounds on Brown Creek to view the effects of his healing on the wounded land of his boyhood.

DREAM COMING TRUE

(*Continued from page 131*)

All but about 5 States have 5 supervisors for each district, which means that more than 8,000 progressive farmers and ranchers, in something like two-thirds of the Nation's counties, are already unselfishly discharging the responsibilities of leadership in our great soil conservation program. With new soil conservation districts being voted in at the rapid rate they are at this time, the number of supervisory farmers will steadily increase until the country is covered with districts.

In addition, there are several thousand other farmers who have accepted appointment—on the same voluntary, unpaid basis—as "assistants" to the district supervisors, in local communities. Also, there are around 300 State soil conservation committee or board members—including farmers and various State agricultural officials—who likewise serve without renumeration in performing their duties with respect to State district affairs.

Probably never before in the history of this or any other country has there existed such a large and active body of volunteer, unpaid agricultural leaders as in this force of soil conservation district supervisors, directors, and other district officials. And district supervisors are organizing with a view to increasing their knowledge of conservation matters and improving their leadership accordingly. About 30 States already have associations of supervisors, and recently the National Association of Soil Conservation District Governing Officials was formally organized.

I think that soil conservation districts and soil conservation are here to stay.

Meanwhile, experience during the 9 years' time since soil conservation districts came onto the American agricultural scene shows that almost every farmer who adopts the planned, acre-by-acre soil conservation way of farming becomes himself a missionary for soil and water conservation. What a gratifying thing this democratic, "grass roots" leadership in soil conservation has become! What a tremendous force it is for the future prosperity of our American agriculture! I hardly need tell you that, personally, I'll not be content until that farm leadership, and the applied soil conservation it represents, has reached into every county in the United States, and to every acre of cropland, pasture land, farm woodland, and idle land. I pledge my continued, undivided efforts, and those of the Soil Conservation Service which I represent, in helping to bring this about.

The Soil Conservation Service and other Federal and State agencies furnish technical and other aids to the districts, on invitation. Otherwise, neither State nor Federal agencies have any rights or prerogatives of any kind whatsoever in most of the districts.

We have learned here in the United States, finally, that we must have soil conservation if we are to have continuous, abundant agricultural production. And we have learned, too, that it must be efficient conservation—the kind that will keep land permanently productive. In turn, soil conservation requires intelligent use and maintenance of land resources. This may mean contour cultivation and terracing to hold soil and conserve rainfall. It may mean seeding grass or planting trees to meet the needs of bare, steep slopes or shallow soil. It may mean changing a rotation to increase soil productivity, and so on.

First of all, however, soil conservation requires a plan—a workable, practical lay-out of the farm, showing what the land is, what needs to be done, and what can be done in every field, pasture, woodlot, and piece of idle land on the entire farm. Such a plan is developed with a map of the farm that shows: (1) the location of the various soils, (2) the slope of the land, (3) the degree and extent of erosion, and (4) such features as fields and pastures, woodlands, streams, and gullies. Planning in this way for the development of soil conservation farming is like making a blueprint to guide the building of a house. It is basic to the safety of the land.

Through its Nation-wide program of work on the land in cooperation with soil conservation districts, the Soil Conservation Service has led in the technical development and application of new and improved measures for the control of erosion, conservation of rainfall, drainage, and improvement in land use. The Soil Conservation Service is essentially a corps of trained, experienced specialists in land, plants, animals, and land use, organized to work cooperatively with farmers out on their land. In addition, the Service carries on, in cooperation with the States, a research program for the development of new and better methods of conservation.

If there were some standardized, simple remedy for the ills of the land that could be applied indiscriminately, the job of soil conservation would be comparatively easy. But there is about as much variety in soil, in topography, in erosion, and in the performance of water and wind and plants, as in the highly complicated landscape of the country. Control methods that work wonders in cotton country may do more harm than good on the wheatlands of the Great Plains, where dust storms sometimes create havoc during protracted drought. Even on neighboring farms, and often in the same field, land problems are almost never completely identical. The specific land treatments used and recommended by Service technicians may therefore vary from one valley to the next, from farm to farm, and even from field to field. Before any work is done, each farm is carefully analyzed, both as a piece of land and as a business enterprise, to determine

productivity, needs, etc., based on the exact lay of the land, the quality of the soil, the degree of erosion damage, and the prevailing erosion hazards on every acre, and the work facilities and desires of the operator.

The next step is to work out with the farmer a plan for practical operation, based on the ground information acquired and translated into eight simple land-capability classes that nontechnical people can understand. This the soil conservation technicians do, not indoors around a table, but out in the fields, working along with the farmer himself, with all the pertinent facts at hand for full and understanding consideration on the immediate spot. They don't give the farmer a bulletin and say: "Read this and you can do the job yourself." They know the job cannot be done that way.

Drawing up a satisfactory land-use and land-protection plan for a farm is only part of the job; however, the main job is actual application of the plan to the land.

The completely coordinated and balanced farm program of the Service calls for the protection of all useful land on all the farms of the country. We fully understand that only a good beginning has been made on the whole soil and water conservation job. But all of us should derive much satisfaction from contrasting progress to date with what was being done before America woke up to the seriousness of the situation only a little while ago. What we pretty generally were doing, previously, was to sit idly by until nearly a fifth of the original area of tillable land in the United States was ruined for further immediate practical cultivation, with about a third of the remaining tillable area badly damaged. Further, more than half of our present area of cropland even now is subject to erosion. Considering crop and grazing lands together, no less than 282 million acres have been practically ruined or very badly damaged; and something like 775 million acres of crop, grazing, forest, and other lands have been eroded to some extent. All together, more than half of the farmland in the country has been damaged in some degree by erosion.

And we still are by no means free from the curse of the red-ink entries in our soil bank balance. About half a million acres are still being practically ruined each year. Even that is a real gain over the approximately 1 million acres a year it is estimated we were letting get away from our farmland capital each year for the period from about 1890 or '95 to 1930 or '35. This damage to our land, which is the source of our food, most of our clothing, and much of our housing materials, has been costing us nearly $4,000,000,000 a year. What a price to pay for the senseless privilege of careless land use! That appalling cost includes loss of plant food contained in the more than

Jerseys grazing on permanent pasture north of Wadesboro.

3 billion tons of farmland soil that has been washing or blowing away each year. It also includes such items as flood damage chargeable to the results of erosion; damage to roads and railroads, damage to streams, harbors, reservoirs, and ditches; and harm to wildlife, fisheries, etc. It does not take into acount, however, such items as lowered purchasing power, reduced railway traffic, narrowed tax base, and the development of rural slums.

Look what we find right here in North Carolina. Surveys have shown that soil erosion has ruined for further practical cultivation some 2,800,000 acres, while serious damage has been done to 9¼ million acres more of cropland and other kinds of land. That is to say, for every 3 acres of good cropland remaining in the State, 2 acres of land have been ruined or seriously affected by erosion. But we have made a good start at control in North Carolina— and there is enough good land left to take care of us if we take care of the land.

Reporting on their operations, 147 representative North Carolina farmers who kept books said they produced 28 percent more per acre of all major crops as a result of using conservation practices. That is an increase which, if extended to all the cropland of the State, would be the practical equivalent of adding around 2 million acres to our producing area.

Most satisfying, though, is the kind of production that resulted from this soil conservation farming. I mean such essentials to better living as an 85-percent increase in numbers of dairy cows and a 119-percent increase in beef cattle, 236 percent more hogs, and 186 percent more poultry. Why were they able to do this? It was because, instead of growing straight corn, grain, cotton, and the like, these farmers put part of their land into erosion-resistant pasture, hay, and other feed crops, under their conservation plans. That made it possible for them to feed more livestock and poultry.

At the same time, these farmers produced more cash crops on fewer acres with their conservation practices. They reported 6,000 more bushels of corn from 800 fewer acres and 179,000 more pounds of tobacco on about the same acreage. This is diversification—diversification on our North Carolina farms. All my life I have heard men plead for diversification and more livestock here in the South, even back to the time of the Farmers' Alliance. But it never came—not until right recently under the urge and momentum of the soil conservation movement.

I think something should be said as to what is being done on a State-wide basis in North Carolina. It is particularly gratifying that by the end of 1945 nearly 2 million acres had been given good conservation treatment. This work included, among other things more than half a million acres of crop rotation, about 280,000 acres terraced, 123,000 acres of pasture seeding; nearly 100,000 acres of woodland improvement, 18,000 acres of kudzu planting, 14,000 acres of tree planting, 10,000 acres of sericea, and 334 farm ponds installed.

But the big job is still ahead of us in North Carolina, as elsewhere. We have made good progress—remarkable progress, in fact—but we have a long way to go yet. That is why we made a Nation-wide conservation needs study some time back, to see just how big the job ahead really is.

We know how big it is; we know that nearly a billion acres of the country's farm and ranch land needs complete, planned conservation treatment. It is a job that wil take probably 20 years, at least, for getting the basic work done, if technical help, labor, machinery, and materials are available. Thereafter, of course, will be the continuing task of maintaining the conservation work. We also know, with dependable accuracy for all practical purposes, how much labor, machinery, and materials will be required to do the job. To my way of thinking, this is the only business-like way of going about the task, whether we are dealing with a single soil conservation district, one state, or the whole country.

Let's look at the conservation needs for North Carolina as originally estimated (some changes may have to be made in refining these estimates). You have seen them many times, probably, but there is no harm in refreshing our memory occasionally on so important a matter.

Our survey shows, for example, that out of 7¼ million acres of cropland here in North Carolina (1940 census), rotations are needed on 6 million acres, cover crops on more than 2 million acres, and strip cropping on 2¼ million acres. We still need better than 5 million acres of terracing, 9 million acres of improved cutting in woodlands, at least 42,000 farm ponds, and nearly 2½ million acres of fertilizing and liming of pastures. These are a few representative examples of what lies ahead. The total job of conservation work needed by North Carolina is estimated to require at least a quarter of a million man-years of skilled and unskilled labor (including technical assistance), plus more than 60,000 machinery-years of work, 28,000 tons of seed, and millions of trees, shrubs, and other plants. Terracing alone calls for nearly 28,000 man-years of labor, 5,573 horse-equipment years, and 4,000 tractor-equipment years.

It is our policy as already mentioned, to work on all kinds of land. This makes it necessary to work with all kinds of people—owners, operators, and tenants, of all races and creeds.

While looking the other day at the "show window" conservation job now under way in Person County, N. C. where it is planned to treat for soil conservation all of the 54 farms along Highway 501 from the Virginia line down to Roxboro, I had an interesting talk with a tenant farmer, Mr. J. R. Wade. Of the many things discussed, I was struck by Mr. Wade's feeling toward his conservation farm plan, which included a colored map showing the capabilities of the land he is farming. He said:

"When I started into this conservation program, I didn't know I was going to get any such thing as a detailed plan of every acre of the land I farm, supported as it is by a map which accurately shows the different kinds of land I am cultivating. This alone is worth entering into a cooperative agreement with the district, even if I hadn't been getting good results from the conservation measures that already have been applied to my land."

Mr. Wade expressed the opinion that many tenant farmers waste time and hurt a lot of land moving each year in search of something they seldom find—a better farm with better land.

"If they would cooperate more with their landlords and build up the productiveness of the soil where they are, they would get along much better, and so would the land," he said. "This soil conservation work you people have started offers the best solution of the 1-year tenant problem that we have."

Before closing, I want to mention what I saw along Highway 74 going from Peachland to Monroe on August 11, for the entire distance. This section, which I can remember as one of only fairly good farming operations and considerable soil erosion, has been revolutionized. That whole distance of about 15 miles is pretty largely farmed; and all of it, every acre I looked at on both sides of the road, as far as I could see, has been effectively treated for soil conservation. Fields not under cultivated crops were

covered with luxuriant stands of lespedeza. It was more than a beautiful sight; it was inspiring, something I never expected to see.

There are other areas of this kind throughout the South, some of which I saw on the same trip, and others I didn't see; but here is one I can particularly recommend to your attention.

The area of good cropland is shrinking everywhere, while population grows. The day will come when the combination of productive land and water will rank second only to people as the most important of all resources. Meanwhile, conservationists must carry on unfailingly in their efforts to stop erosion. Time is getting shorter. Those who would thwart the progress of conservation, for whatever purpose, are in this day and age the enemies of mankind. They should be promptly discredited.

There is no second choice; we must maintain an adequate area of productive land. That is an area—here and throughout the nations of the earth—which will be sufficient to produce at least a minimum nutritional diet for the populations of this and other countries. This is the least that common sense—and self preservation—requires. How will this be done? Is there an alternative to the kind of soil conservation program I have described?

I know of only two: One is outright and absolute Government regulation of the use and treatment of all lands; another is despicable abandonment of hope. Which of these three do you prefer?

"If You Fail, We Slump"

(Remarks by Sim Bennett, a local farmer and preacher, at the Bennett plantation on Gould's Fork Creek, N. C., during a stop of the tour on Hugh Bennett Day)

MY FATHER (John Bennett, an ex-slave) moved here on the Bennett place in the spring of 1872, and I lived here with my folks until I was 26. I thought there was no place like home and think so yet. Because under the conditions prevailing in those days, "The Boss"—W. O. Bennett (father of Hugh Bennett)—as we all called him—and the whole family was very good to us. The Boss helped see to us going to school—such schools as we had then, sometimes running 2 months during the year and some years there were no schools. After a while the school terms increased and about that time I had gotten above free school age, but I still wanted to go some more. So I carried my wishes to the Boss, as we often did on the plantation. I'll never forget what he said. "Sim, you go out there and see if the teacher will teach you and let you hear some of his classes." It worked out O. K., and so I went to school some more.

I lived with Dr. J. H. Bennett, brother of Dr. Hugh H. Bennett, after I was married, for 37 years.

Out here on this plantation where you and your brothers and sisters, and all of us, were raised, people didn't tell lies. At one time I didn't think a white man would tell an untruth. But once in town, I heard a white man tell an untruth, and it bothered me. But I learned by that that there are different kinds of people in the world.

Sim Bennett.

I never heard the Boss use a curse word all my life, unless you would call "Golly me" one. And now I am glad to see and look at Mr. Hugh again to know that he is taking on this big, tough job known as soil conservation and erosion control. It is far more important at this time than shooting at the moon, as the papers have been talking about lately. I'll assure you, Mr. Hugh, that we, your comrades, will stand by you, for if you fail, we slump.

Hugh Hammond Bennett

Introductory note in booklet issued by Brown Creek Soil Conservation District

WE ARE PROUD that Hugh Bennett is one of us. He came from a farm in Anson County, one of the five counties in our soil conservation district. He came from a pioneer family which has given many leaders to the community—leaders whose influence spreads to State and national affairs.

Hugh Bennett is known wherever hoe scratches earth. His fame as a land doctor extends to all the continents and to many of the islands of the sea. His science, and his leadership, are invoked wherever man struggles against wind and rain and flood.

In the course of his long battle against erosion, Hugh Bennett worked in nearly every county in the United States. A year or two ago, he flew to lend his help to the Union of South Africa. Years before the Matanuska Valley reached our front pages, Dr. Bennett was up there, with a pack on his back, exploring the agricultural possibilities of the Far North. He spent several years—valuable, exciting years—in the Canal Zone and the jungles of the upper Amazon. His findings in Cuba virtually revolutionized the sugar industry there.

Eventually, because he had experience and scientific knowledge and courage, Hugh Bennett was called upon to lick a great "national menace"—soil erosion. In tackling the assignment, he quickly laid the basis for the Nation's great soil conservation program. His was the guiding hand in the development of the spectacular early demonstrations and research, the complete farm conservation plan, and the typing of land according to use-capabilities.

From the beginning, Hugh Bennett urged that farmers be the leaders in soil conservation, because they owned and farmed the lands on which all of us depend. Soil conservation districts, formed and run by farmers, sprang from this idea. Our Brown Creek District was the first of these districts in the Nation.

Hugh Bennett traveled. But he never traveled so far or so fast as to shake from his shoes the mud of Brown Creek. He is one with the land of the Tarheel. A club woman, confused as to names, once referred to him as "that interesting speaker, Mr. Clay!" Congressional committees know him as a unique Washington administrator who talks farmer-language while explaining soil conservation in terms of specialized machinery or lespedeza bicolor honey which he lugs to the hearings.

Hugh Bennett, versatile as he is, finds that he can't be in Washington and Johanesburg and Wadesboro at the same time; therefore, he writes and speaks, uses press and radio and motion pictures, to amplify his thunder. Recognized authority at home and abroad is his monumental 1,000-page "Soil Conservation," a reference book which states the problems, program, science, and technique of soil conservation. Laboring far into the nights, he has produced a sizeable array of other books, articles for national magazines, contributions to scientific journals. Hugh Bennett is a good psychologist. He violates all or most of the rules of public speaking—concentrates on his message. And as genial, forthright Hugh Bennett—with no attempt to be otherwise—he does a little better than all right.

Many other lands are copying Dr. Bennett's Soil Conservation Service. Visitors flock to his office for counsel from the far corners of the world. Honors heap on the man who for many years was a solitary figure crying in the wilderness, warning of soil losses when few would listen. A tired, worried humanity today pays homage to the man who has shown how to save the common heritage of soil and at the same time add materially to its productiveness.

Hugh Bennett is unchanged by all this. He is much more interested in the soil than public acclaim—much more interested in the soil, and in people, and in robust eating. Having sampled, and enjoyed, the choicest victuals of many lands, he is more than ever convinced that food—the harvest of a good stewardship—is important to world peace. "When nations eat," Dr. Bennett says, "they are less likely to pick a fight."

Yes, we are proud that Hugh Bennett is one of us. As supervisors of the first soil conservation district in the Nation, we are pleased to dedicate this booklet about our own soil conservation program to the world's leading expert on soil conservation and wise land use, Hugh Hammond Bennett.

Resolution

Board of Commissioners

WHEREAS: Civilization on earth depends upon the thin surface layer of topsoil:

AND WHEREAS: The topsoil in America has been wasted at a rate never before experienced anywhere in the world:

AND WHEREAS: Excessive erosion is due mainly to carelessness and a lack of information as to feasible means of prevention:

AND WHEREAS: Hugh Hammond Bennett, reared in Anson County, and now Chief of the United States Soil Conservation Service, has become the foremost authority on erosion and its prevention; has developed means for conservation of soil and moisture, not only at low cost, but when carefully followed, may be expected to produce greater profit from farming:

AND WHEREAS: The first soil conservation district to be formed anywhere, to apply the Bennett principles of conservation, was established here in Anson County:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: 1. That the Board of County Commissioners of Anson County, convened in regular session on this the First Monday in September, 1946, extends to Dr. Hugh Hammond Bennett cordial greetings and best wishes on the occasion of the proposed celebration by his home people during the present month;

2. That the board, in its official capacity, and as representative of the citizens of Anson County, recognizes a deep sense of obligation to Dr. Bennett for his achievements; that it is the sense of this board that every man, woman and child, not only in Anson County, but everywhere, and future generations will eventually live happier and more prosperous lives by reason of his labors and the work of the organization known as Soil Conservation Service, which he has been primarily instrumental in having established, and which he has directed since its inception:

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the board commends the members of the board of supervisors of the Brown Creek Soil Conservation District for having decided to pay honor to this distinguished native son on "Hugh Hammond Bennett Soil Conservation Day," in Wadesboro, September 9, 1946;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That this resolution be spread upon the minutes of the board, and a copy thereof prepared and presented to Dr. Bennett.

I, Francis E. Liles, clerk of the board of commissioners of Anson County, N. C., do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of a resolution adopted by the board of commissioners of Anson County in regular session on Monday, September 2, 1946, and in testimony thereof I do hereunto set my hand and official seal of office.

[SEAL] (Signed) FRANCIS E. LILES,
Clerk to the Board of Commissioners
of Anson County, N. C.

WHITEMAN FARM

(*Continued from page 124*)

most suitable use is fully as important as strip cropping, terracing, proper liming, manuring, and fertilizing. Since his herd of Aberdeen-Angus numbers 85, manure is plentiful. He plows in 20 tons to the acre, limes to test, and applies 500 pounds of 5–10–10 fertilizer.

"I don't claim that holding the soil on the farm is the cure-all for low yields," said Mr. Whiteman, "but I don't see how anybody can expect to farm efficiently if he's satisfied to put fertilizer, manure, and lime on his fields and then have the stuff wash away every time it rains with any force."

He's satisfied that his strips and diversion terraces are holding his soil and plant foods on the

(*Continued on page 143*)

"The Hope of the Garden Is Not Gone"

Address by Jonathan Daniels, author, journalist, and former Presidential secretary, at joint Civitan-Rotary luncheon, Wadesboro, N. C., on Hugh Bennett Conservation Day

ANSON COUNTY has quite a job today. This celebration seems to me not only a homecoming but an argument. By a strange coincidence, I think, the two North Carolinians who in our times have made the greatest impress on the mind of the world have joined in the expressed faith that a man cannot come home again. Thomas Wolfe, the greatest writer the State has produced, left behind when he died a great novel called "You Can't Go Home Again." And before Wolfe wrote his book, Hugh Bennett, who has always seemed to me at least as much a poet as a soil scientist, said very much the same thing.

"There is really no such thing," he said, "as returning to the places and people you remember from your youth. It is a disquieting experience. You realize that on this old earth with its endless changing processes we are all transient visitors; and you begin to count your score."

"Even in my time," he said here in Anson County once, "this part of the country has changed. The old swimming holes I remember have fallen away to little shallow red mud puddles. The lines of the hills, the entire landscape has changed. Many a field you and I remember in virgin woods or thick grass has been cottoned out and gutted. We men who have allowed this soil to be swept from under us and from under our children at such a bewildering rate have a good deal to answer for. We didn't know any better. But we do now."

I am not entirely sure about that. Of course, we can all see the defenses Hugh Bennett and his men have built across America against the loss of our soil. As neighbors we have watched the creative as well as the defensive aspects of Hugh Bennett's work. In wartime we were fed from acres which, when Hugh Bennett began as chief of the Soil Conservation Service, were producing only dust storms for dark skies. But many people who think that Hugh Bennett's science is a mere matter of water and wind, soil and plows have only the slightest understanding of the meaning of Hugh Bennett the man. What he discovered was the carelessness and blindness of man. Men had seen gullies before him. Children can see them.

I can't think of an easier county to come happily home to than Anson. It keeps the good qualities upon which homesickness thrives. Also you remember that the Pee Dee River which runs along its border, was first considered by Stephen Foster when he searched the map for a two-syllable southern river about which to make a song of homesickness. The Pee Dee is our Suwannee still. And I can't think of a man who could more easily come home than Hugh Bennett. I have seen the regard with which he is held in the Nation and the world. But you and I have also seen the man. Frankly, he still looks to me like a man who might still be plowing those acres he gutted out when he was too young to know better. Certainly no sheet erosion or anything else has washed the sense of the Anson soil from his spirit. The tar still sticks to his heels.

And I can testify he can be eager about homecoming. I remember seeing him in Washington in wartime just after he had come home from South Africa. I paid the check for our luncheon in the Willard Hotel and I can testify he had not lost his Anson County appetite. Also, I can testify that he had put on no pretensions in Washington or the world. He had just come back from many thousands of miles by Army bomber. He had been, he said, scared only once and that was all the time. He returned with a distinct dislike for the South African spitting cobras whom he had met in his soil studies there. And he also returned with a tragic story of the manner in which the South Africa, which has always seemed to us as rich as diamonds from Kimberly and gold from the Transvaal, was becoming swiftly and almost desperately impoverished by the erosion of its soils.

I was interested in Hugh Bennett's report then not merely as one of his neighbors and chief admirers but because my boss then, Franklin D. Roosevelt, even in the midst of war was already thinking about Hugh Bennett's teachings as a part of a plan for peace for the world which he believed must contain plenty if it could ever hope for security. You remember that the acceptance of Hugh Bennett's discoveries (which for 20 years

had been scoffed at) was one of the items in Roosevelt's program for America. The extension of that work was a part of Roosevelt's purposes for the world.

I for one always remember Hugh Bennett when I think of FDR's statement immediately after Pearl Harbor when he promised implacable retribution but added: "The true goal we seek is far above and beyond the ugly field of battle. When we resort to force, as now we must, we are determined that the force shall be directed toward ultimate good as well as immediate evil. We Americans are not destroyers, we are builders * * *

There is a tragic possibility that Roosevelt may have been mistaken about Americans as builders and not destroyers. Long before the atomic scientists, Hugh Bennett who showed us how to build also brought us face to face with the tragic results of our own destructiveness. * * * It is perhaps the greatest mark of the genius of Hugh Bennett that we honor him because he has indicated us as a nation of destroyers—careless, greedy, in a hurry—and has still kept not only a nation's respect but its affection, too.

Perhaps that destructiveness as Hugh Bennett showed it to us—in the changing lines of the hills of Anson, in the encroaching desert where the West's green grass had been, even in the dust storms—may seem now very tame stuff beside the powers to destroy we have deliberately and scientifically developed in our times. I am not sure. But I am sure that not even the atomic bomb is more terrifying than Hugh Bennett's discovery that under our ignorance and complacency the substance of our land could disappear without our awareness. In that sheet erosion which unseen can strip our fattest fields, I think Hugh Bennett, as the poet and philosopher as well as scientist, has taught us from the simple simile of soil that the same thing can happen to our hopes.

Anson could never have chosen a more important time to welcome Hugh Bennett home. It was Hugh Bennett who gave Roosevelt and America the sharply telling phrase, "human erosion." What happened to the land happened also to the people upon it. But in our times the danger spreads—and swiftly. Like sheet erosion it is not always easy to see it. Already the hopes of a creative peace in the world and a productive peace at home seem worn if not gullied. * * *

This earth and its promises are ours. And upon it we shall measure ourselves and our future. The good earth is hacked but not lost. The hope of the garden is not gone. But suddenly—very suddenly—in surprise and chagrin, we could face desert where we hoped to behold fulfillment of our dreams. Blindness is not restricted to agriculture. Indeed, they are blind who see what Hugh Bennett has taught us only in our fields. He has been talking and teaching not about our soils but ourselves. We need to contemplate not only our old fields but our old fears.

I am happy to join Anson in welcoming Hugh Bennett home. But I have a hunch that in more ways than one, the coming and the welcoming ought to be reversed. Sometimes, even when we are there, home still seems far, far away. And nobody has shown us the way to its meaning and keeping better than Hugh Bennett. He has looked at folly, stubbornness, ignorance and destruction without losing heart. He has taught us to build steadily in good will to new hope. We welcome such a man home. We would be happy men if with confidence we could hail such a spirit in our world.

WHITEMAN FARM

(Continued from page 141)

field. He'll tell you how the creek which drains on his farm runs clear now. He'd rather not talk about how it looked before he started his conservation plan.

According to B. E. Corey, his farm manager, who has been farming, man and boy, since 1907, Whiteman is the hardest working farm owner he's ever seen. When he comes in from his job as musical director of the American Broadcasting Company to spend three days on the farm he really works, says Corey, citing as evidence the 54 pounds he lost last spring, plowing, baling, and managing his cattle.

Whiteman, who spent a good part of his boyhood on his father's ranch outside of Denver, Colo., plans eventually to retire full-time to his farm. His herd includes stock with some of the best blood lines in Aberdeen-Angus records. His main bull, Bandoleer of Anoke XIII, springs from two of the finest lines in history—Blackbird and Blackcap. One of his heifers last year took a first place at the New Jersey State Fair. His young breeding stock has been bringing an average of $500 each. He sells his inferior stock for beef and veal.

Next time you hear the master producing sweet music over the air, think of him also as a dirt farmer who believes there's only one way to farm—the conservation way.

Mud-slinging for constructive ends. This big blast opened a tributary to drain into the Pocomoke. See the article "After 100 years," page 125.

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